From: Association of Deputy District Attorneys
To: Kutches, Brandon (SHF)
Subject: Monday Morning Memo for February 4, 2019
Date: Monday, February 04, 2019 5:05:54 AM

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Courts & Rulings

Rule barring sex offenders from early parole invalid
The Court of Appeal for this district yesterday declared invalid a regulation promulgated by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation which categorically bars inmates who were previously convicted of crimes requiring registration as a sex offender from seeking early parole under a recently-enacted constitutional provision.
Metropolitan News-Enterprise

Calif. weighs abolishing court fees after landmark ruling
In a landmark decision that advocates say could lead California to become the first state to abolish court fees, a three judge panel waived the facilities and operations costs and said the restitution fine must be stayed until the state can demonstrate that she can afford to pay. Notably, the ruling also invited the state legislature to amend criminal statutes so that trial courts would have to consider a defendant's ability to pay before imposing any "mandatory" fines.
Law 360

Reliance can't be placed on government staff members
A couple was unjustified in accepting, at face value, pronouncements by county staff members, including the planning director, that permits for a particular use of their real property were unavailable, the Sixth District Court of Appeal has said, holding that higher-level determinations should have been sought before challeging the purported policy through noncompliance.
Metropolitan News-Enterprise

Scalia and the right to counsel
The preservation of personal liberty is of "great importance," for if a judicial officer imprisoned arbitrarily whomever he desired, "there would soon be an end of all other rights and immunities." Thus wrote Justice Antonin Scalia, quoting Blackstone, in his 2004 dissent in Hamdi v. Rumsfeld arguing against the indefinite detention of U.S. citizens charged with terrorism.
The Marshall Project

Judge's in-chambers inspection of gun not misconduct
A judge did not commit misconduct in examining a gun in chambers to determine if its appearance, in different light, would match the description by a robbery victim, the Third District Court of Appeal has held. C.B., a minor, challenged the findings by Sacramento Superior Court Judge Alyson Lewis that he had committed robbery and assault by means likely to produce great bodily injury, and had personally used a firearm in the robbery.
Metropolitan News-Enterprise

San Diego County opens old courthouse to shelter migrants
San Diego County, often the first U.S. stop for asylum-seeking families

who make their way to sponsors across the country, will allow an old courthouse to be used as a temporary shelter while it waits on the state and federal government to put up funds to address the migrant crisis at the U.S.-Mexico border.
Courthouse News Service

Order that antipsychotic drugs be administered to rapist must fall
An order that an institutionalized sexually violent predator continue to submit involuntarily to administration of antipsychotic drugs has been reversed by the Fifth District Court of Appeal because the judge who issued the order applied the wrong evidentiary standard, with the justices rejecting the contention of the Office of Attorney General that in light of medical evidence, the error is harmless.
Metropolitan News-Enterprise

Judge advances protesters' free speech lawsuit against San Diego Police
The San Diego branch of the NAACP and a handful of protesters arrested while holding a candlelight vigil for a man shot and killed by a police officer in 2016 may advance their free speech lawsuit against local police, a federal judge has ruled.
Courthouse News Service

Prop 47, 57 & AB 109

Prop 57: Cops say court ruling opens door to early release of violent felons
Gregory Gadlin is a convicted rapist and child molester serving 35 years to life in prison under the state's Three Strikes and You're Out law after an assault with a deadly weapon, but an appellate court decision this week said he should be eligible for consideration for early release.
Bay Area News Group

Two 2020 ballot measures will test the crime attitudes of Californians
Federal court orders to decrease prison overcrowding provided another rationale for legislative measures and ballot measures, including one that Brown personally sponsored in 2016, that have completely transformed criminal justice policy. Many law enforcement officials see what's happened as going too far, putting too many offenders back on the street to commit new crimes. And voters will be asked to once again reverse course with two 2020 ballot measures.
Desert Sun

New law gives teen killer a break, victim's family anguish
The memory of opening the front doors of her Discovery Bay home to see Richmond police officers on her doorstep is forever etched in Melanie Schwartz's mind. She remembers her legs giving out when the officers

told her that her 20-year-old daughter had been fatally shot that night in May 2017 at a Richmond park.
San Francisco Chronicle

South Lake Tahoe Police report big jump in vehicle thefts
Followers of South Tahoe Now's police log have long known that the number of local auto thefts has been a concern of the South Lake Tahoe Police Department (SLTPD) for the last several years, but they are now seeing a disturbing trend with a large spike in the crime over the past year. In 2018 SLTPD investigated 70 auto thefts, with 60 of them being crimes committed in the city limits.
SouthTahoeNow.com

Police department seeks community nonprofit as grant partner
The Pasadena Police Department is seeking a Pasadena-based nonprofit organization as a partner to apply for grant money provided under Proposition 47. Prop 47 was approved by California voters in 2014. The measure recategorized some nonviolent offenses, including drug and property offenses, as misdemeanors, rather than felonies.
Pasadena News Now

Phil Matier: Drug addicts are increasing in number
A new report from the San Francisco Health Department says there are more drug addicts on the streets than students enrolled in schools. KCBS Radio, KPIX-5, and Chronicle Insider Phil Matier explains that the number of drug addicts are rising because of opioid epidemic, poor supply and the passing of prop 47.
KCBS

Prosecutions / Prosecutors

Assault suspect extradited to SF without change in city's sanctuary policy
The Department of Homeland Security has apparently backed away from its demand that San Francisco make an exception to its sanctuary city policy so that a Tunisia national accused of rape could be extradited from Canada. Mohamed Ben Azaza, 39, was booked into San Francisco County Jail at 12:43 a.m. Tuesday.
SF Gate

Landmark juvenile justice reform challenged by California DAs
Several California district attorneys have launched an effort to roll back a landmark juvenile justice reform in California, a fight that both sides expect will ultimately be decided by the Supreme Court of California. Last year, Gov. Jerry Brown (D) signed into law Senate Bill 1391, which prohibits counties from trying anyone younger than 16 in adult court.
Chronicle of Social Change

LA District Attorney announces new first-of-its-kind Mental

Health Division
In an effort to divert the pipeline of mentally ill people funneled into Los Angeles County jails, the LA County District Attorney's Office has launched a new Mental Health Division. The division is the first of its kind in the state, and possibly the nation, according to LA County District Attorney Jackie Lacey, who announced the addition on Wednesday, flanked by LA County Supervisors, law enforcement leaders, including LA County Sheriff Alex Villanueva, and judges.
Witness LA

Accused Palm Springs cop killer gets trial date
A trial date for March 8 was set Friday for a man accused of fatally shooting two Palm Springs police officers in late 2016. John Hernandez Felix, 28, is accused of gunning down veteran training Officer Jose Gilbert Vega, 63, and rookie Officer Lesley Zerebny, 27, on Oct. 8, 2016, after they responded to a family disturbance call at his home.
City News Service

8 indicted in $123 million Southern California workers' comp scam
Eight employees of an Inland Empire physicians group that contracted with the state to perform services for people with workers' compensation insurance claims are under indictment for allegedly defrauding the system in a $123 million scam that involved filling exorbitantly priced prescriptions that were not required to treat patients, prosecutors said Wednesday.
City News Service

Special prosecutor recommends five years in prison for woman who faked pregnancy, planned adoption
She may have gotten away with being cruel, if she hadn't been on probation at the time. Elizabeth Jones, the woman who faked being pregnant to deceive an Orange County couple trying to adopt, should receive five years in prison, according to a motion filed by the special prosecutor in charge of investigating the case in Virginia.
Southern California News Group

Pomona officers acquitted of charges in violent arrest
Two Pomona police officers have been acquitted of charges stemming from the violent arrest of a teenage boy at the Los Angeles County Fair, prosecutors said Saturday, Jan. 26. Chad Jensen, 51, was charged in the retrial in federal court with deprivation of rights under color of law for allegedly beating then-16-year-old Christian Aguilar in September 2015.
City News Service

Chinese telecommunications device manufacturer and its U.S. affiliate indicted for theft of trade secrets, wire fraud, and obstruction of justice
A 10-count indictment unsealed today in the Western District of

Washington State charges Huawei Device Co., Ltd. and Huawei Device Co. USA with theft of trade secrets conspiracy, attempted theft of trade secrets, seven counts of wire fraud, and one count of obstruction of justice.
Department of Justice

7 friends, relatives of man charged in shooting death of Central Valley officer are indicted
Seven friends and relatives of a Mexican national charged with the shooting death of a Northern California police officer have been indicted on federal charges for allegedly helping him evade capture, federal officials said Friday. U.S. Attorney McGregor Scott said a federal grand jury on Thursday indicted the five men and two women with charges of "conspiring to harbor an alien" for helping Gustavo Perez Arriaga, who is in the country illegally.
AP

Criminal Justice / Public Safety

L.A. Times continues its attacks on LAPD officers, decrying racial disparities in police stops
Gentle readers, we return today to a topic that has become all too familiar: the Los Angeles Times and its eagerness to discredit law enforcement, most especially the Los Angeles Police Department. On Thursday, the Times published a news story under the following provocative headline: "Stop-and-frisk in a car:' Elite LAPD unit disproportionately stopped black drivers, data show."
PJ Media

How a California officer protected neo-Nazis and targeted their victims
The testimony of a California police officer leading the inquiry into a series of stabbings at a neo-Nazi rally indicated that he targeted leftwing activists and victims rather than focusing his investigation on armed white supremacists. The officer, Donovan Ayres, a 12-year-veteran of the California highway patrol, admitted he pursued information on the political affiliations and online activity of leftwing activists and victims.
The Guardian

LA County Sheriff's detective explains how he returned to work 2 weeks after stabbing
An LA County Sheriff's detective can smile now as he relates the story of how he was able to return to work within weeks of being stabbed last year. Elliott Uribe was stabbed in broad daylight in the parking lot of a fast food restaurant. Uribe was, amazingly, back to work two weeks later. His recovery has been nothing short of remarkable.
CBS LA

Policy & Legal Issues

Audit of California prisons finds inmate rehab efforts ineffective
While California lawmakers have embraced prison reform and rehabilitation programs over the last several years to address overcrowding, a sobering report from the state auditor Thursday found results have been lackluster. The extensive report found inmates are not being placed in the correct rehabilitation programs, leaving them unprepared for when they leave prison.
Courthouse News Service

Newspapers sue Sacramento sheriff for refusing to release records
The Sacramento Bee and Los Angeles Times have filed a lawsuit against Sacramento County Sheriff Scott Jones for refusing to comply with a California Public Records Act request for records related to sheriff's deputies employed by his agency. The lawsuit, filed in Sacramento Superior Court earlier today, said both newspapers were seeking access to records related to deputies who fired their weapons or engaged in misconduct while they were on duty.
California Globe

When *Reason* requested the new L.A. Sheriff's disciplinary records, the deputies union got an injunction to block us
A judge has temporarily rebuffed *Reason* in our attempt to request any disciplinary records related to new Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva, as law enforcement unions across the state fight the implementation of a new police transparency law. Villaneuva, who was elected last November, promised on the campaign trail to push federal immigration officials out of Los Angeles County jails and to also fight corruption and cronyism in the leadership of the sheriff's department.
Reason

Burlingame charging more than $3,000 to fulfill public records request over fired officer
The American Civil Liberties Union is questioning the police chief in Burlingame who is charging KTVU more than $3,000 to fulfill a California Public Records Request seeking information about police misconduct. Specifically, the request revolves around redacting 29 audio and video files regarding an officer who was fired after his superiors discovered he had been having inappropriate relationships with women who had been arrested by the department.
KTVU

In the heart of California, a sheriff makes a case for a middle ground on immigration
Donald Trump easily won Tulare County in 2016, taking 53% of the vote to Hillary Clinton's 41%, and Sheriff Mike Boudreaux proudly displays a photo of himself with the president on a shelf in his Visalia office. But don't jump to conclusions. I was escorted to the sheriff's office by a

deputy who was born in Mexico, and whose family crossed the border illegally many years ago.
Los Angeles Times

Best Buy employee who was fired for tackling a burglary suspect is offered his job back
When a Best Buy employee in the Sacramento area saw a man assaulting a law enforcement officer and then fleeing, he jumped to the officer's aid, chasing the suspect and tackling him to the ground in a parking lot. The employee's quick thinking helped officers catch the man, who was suspected of numerous burglaries in Nevada - but it cost him his job because he violated company policy.
Los Angeles Times

Kim Kardashian advocates restoring ex-felon voting rights at California Capitol
Kim Kardashian West visited the California Capitol this week to advocate for a state bill to restore voting rights to ex-felons. According to The Sacramento Bee, the Free the Vote Act would allow nearly 50,000 parolees in California to regain the right to vote. State Assemblyman Kevin McCarty (D), who co-authored the bill with State Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez (D), on Monday shared a photo of himself and the reality star together at the Capitol.
The Hill

LA property owners that lease to unlicensed cannabis businesses may soon pay the price
Building owners who rent out their property to the hundreds of unlicensed cannabis businesses in the city of Los Angeles might soon face fines of $20K a day, have utilities shut off, doors padlocked and be subject to other enforcement measures. This is the only way for the struggling cannabis industry to fully flourish as a legitimate business in the city, a city of Los Angeles official said.
Bisnow

Crime

Thousand Palms cannabis dispensary raided for operating illegally, investigators say
A Thousand Palms cannabis dispensary was among 10 across Riverside County that were raided Thursday for operating illegally, investigators said. The Riverside County District Attorney's office's Cannabis Regulation Task Force converged on Green Empire, 72-911 Ramon Road, about 8 a.m. Investigators also targeted dispensaries in Banning, Temecula, Lake Elsinore, Jurupa Valley and Hemet.
Palm Springs Desert Sun

Man offers to pay robber to get his laptop back, is slashed with knife

A young Pasadena man chasing three robbers who entered his home and stole his laptop was slashed with a knife by one the suspects near the Allen Avenue Gold Line station about 10:14 p.m. Sunday night, police said. Earlier, the 26-year-old victim likely was followed home by the trio, police said. The victim entered the home in the 1700 block of Wagner Street and used the bathroom.
Pasadena News Now

Crime is down in Los Angeles, but some West L.A. neighborhoods experienced waves of property crimes
The crime rate in Los Angeles fell last year for the first time in five years, Mayor Eric Garcetti and Police Chief Michel Moore said, and the city recorded its second-fewest number of homicides since the 1960s. There were 259 homicides in the city in 2018, according to crime data the Los Angeles Police Department released this month. That's down from 282 in 2017.
Los Angeles Daily News

Hate crimes rise in Los Angeles, other largest U.S. cities for 5th year in a row, CSUSB report says
Hate crimes in the nation's largest cities increased for the fifth consecutive year in 2018, according to a report released by the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism in Cal State San Bernardino. Many cities including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Houston, Dallas, Seattle and San Francisco saw the highest number of hate crimes in a decade, and cities such as Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Philadelphia saw pronounced increases in the second half of the year, particularly around the time of the November mid-term elections.
Orange County Register

LAPD Chief says it's unclear whether race complaints linked to crime reduction
Los Angeles Police Chief Michel Moore said it was not clear if recent reductions in violent crime in South Los Angeles are connected to concerns some of the officers dispatched to address those crime problems have been stopping and questioning a disproportionate number of black people. "I think it needs much more discussion," Moore said Tuesday when asked by NBC4 if the two events were linked.
NBC4

Money was a motive in murder of Grover Beach woman, DA's Office says
An Indiana man accused of fatally stabbing his mother, a Grover Beach resident, last October was at least partly motivated by money, the San Luis Obispo County District Attorney's Office says. Prosecutors on Friday filed an additional allegation in its murder case against Levente Laszlo Lazar of Bloomington, Indiana, saying he was motivated by financial gain, a special allegation that opens him up to the death penalty if

convicted.
The Tribune

Parolee charged in toddler's shooting of mom
Felony charges were filed Friday against a parolee who allegedly left a shotgun in the backseat of a car, where authorities say a 4-year-old boy found the weapon and accidentally shot his mother in Norwalk. Brandon Gilbert Ambriz, 24, of Norwalk, pleaded not guilty to four counts of child abuse - involving four children who were in the car - and one count of possession of a firearm by a felon.
City News Service

LA County Sheriff

LA County Sheriff accuses predecessor of under-reporting jail violence, signals policy change
Sheriff Alex Villanueva Wednesday accused his predecessor of under-reporting jail violence while tying deputies' hands and leaving them vulnerable to inmate assaults, saying he will let jail guards know they have a right to defend themselves. "The conditions (in the jails) are destabilizing ... this is a social experiment that people were not paying attention to,'' the sheriff told reporters at the Hall of Justice, warning that deaths and even a large-scale riot could be the ultimate result.
NBC4

L.A. supervisors are being far too deferential to the sheriff on deputy discipline
It is good that Supervisors Kathryn Barger and Sheila Kuehl want to look into Sheriff Alex Villanueva's troubling reinstatement of a deputy who had been fired on allegations of domestic violence. On Tuesday the full Board of Supervisors would be wise to adopt their motion, which calls on county lawyers to tell them how to deal with conflicts between the supervisors and the sheriff, all of whom are independently elected officials.
Los Angeles Times

L.A. County supervisors admonish Sheriff Villanueva for reinstating deputy accused of domestic abuse
Los Angeles County supervisors issued a sharp rebuke to Sheriff Alex Villanueva on Tuesday over his reinstatement of a fired deputy in an unusual show of disapproval to come so early in his term. The county's governing body voted to send a letter to Villanueva expressing concern over his rehiring of a deputy who was fired in connection with allegations of domestic abuse and later served as a volunteer on Villanueva's election campaign.
Los Angeles Times

Villanueva bars ICE from LA County jails in civil immigration cases

Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva issued a directive Wednesday barring U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement agents from entering county jails, courts and police stations on civil immigration matters. Villanueva told reporters at the LA Hall of Justice that his directive, which takes effect Friday, brings the county in line with Senate Bill 54 - the California Values Act - which limits local police collaboration with ICE in the Golden State.
SCV TV

Sheriff Villanueva's vision for LASD is as dangerous and backward as we feared
In case anyone had any doubt about who L.A. County voters elected as sheriff late last year, Alex Villanueva set them straight Wednesday as he laid out a vision that leads inexorably backward to a time of excessive force against jail inmates. He branded the department's policy and practice of easing up on inmate abuse a "social experiment" gone wrong.
Los Angeles Times

Los Angeles County

LAPD didn't stop sharing 'humiliating' nude photo wrongly identified as captain: lawsuit
A veteran police captain in Los Angeles was subjected to a sexually charged, hostile work environment after a nude photo of a woman was shared among officers, some of whom falsely claimed the image depicted the female supervisor, an explosive lawsuit claims. The lawsuit, filed by LAPD Capt. Lillian L. Carranza, alleges that department brass knew the "deeply humiliating" naked image was being circulated within the force, along with disparaging comments about her, but didn't tell the 28-year veteran, the Los Angeles Times reports.
New York Post

Convictions / Sentences / Parole

Parole recommended for Manson follower Leslie Van Houten
A California panel on Wednesday recommended that Charles Manson follower Leslie Van Houten be paroled after serving more than four decades in prison. After a hearing at the women's prison in Corona, California, commissioners of the Board of Parole Hearings found for the third time that the 69-year-old Van Houten was suitable for release.
NBC4

Federal jury rules OC Sheriff's deputy used excessive force on knife-wielding suspect
An Orange County Sheriff's deputy was hailed as a hero for stopping a crazed knife-wielding suspect in 2013. But a federal jury now finds the hero used excessive force in subduing the man. And they ruled Orange County must now pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in restitution to

the man's mother. Connor Zion's family cherished his talent and his life. Zion's life was cut short in a controversial encounter with deputies.
CBS LA

Fresno man sentenced to life in prison for Lebec murder
Joshua Aaron Robertson, 29, entered an open no contest plea to one count of first-degree murder and three counts of kidnapping, according to Ricardo Santiago, spokesperson for the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office. He also admitted the special circumstance allegations of killing a witness and lying in wait, as well as two counts of an unrelated arson, and one count each of possession of a flammable device and firearm by a felon, Santiago added.
KHTS

Highland Park man gets probation in 'very unique' drug case
A 21-year-old man who accompanied his now-jailed father in a bid to sell about 44 pounds of cocaine to an undercover federal drug agent at a Highland Park home doubling as an unlicensed day care center was sentenced today to home detention and community service. Miguel Talamante could have received about three years in federal prison, but U.S. District Judge Fernando M. Olguin determined that the "very unique" case warranted a sentence of the four months the defendant already has served.
NBC4

L.A. bank heist getaway driver sentenced to nearly 12 year
The man who acted as a getaway driver and recruiter for a Los Angeles-based bank robbery ring, was sentenced Tuesday, Jan. 29, to nearly 12 years in federal prison. He is currently serving a 15-year sentence tied to a 2007 crime. Daniel "Malo" Ochoa, 27, a Mexican national, helped to organize a series of armed bank robberies in 2016.
City News Service

Sex offender receives life sentence for 2016 Pasadena kidnapping
A sex offender received a life sentence Monday for kidnapping two women in Pasadena in 2016 with the intent to assault them. Anthony Seth McDaniel, 41, of Compton will have to serve a minimum of 28 years in prison before being eligible for parole, according to Los Angeles County District Attorney spokesman Ricardo Santiago.
San Gabriel Valley Tribune

Reduced prison sentence for Santa Cruz double murderer spurs parole hearing
She donates to charity, volunteers for hospice and - on her path to sobriety behind bars - convicted killer Kimberly Labore successfully pleaded to reduce her 60-to-life sentence for two brutal homicides in 1998. In August, Gov. Jerry Brown reduced Labore's sentence to a minimum 20 years imprisonment after learning about the former

methamphetamine user's path to productive sobriety in state custody.
Santa Cruz Sentinel

51-year-old ex-Hermosa Beach officer sentenced to probation after trying to have sex with 16-year-old
A 51-year-old former Hermosa Beach police officer will serve three years' probation after he was caught trying to meet up with a 16-year-old girl for sex through an online dating site, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office said Wednesday. Through a plea deal, Todd A. Lewitt will avoid jail time and will not have to sign up with the state's sex offender registry, according to DA's office spokesman Paul Eakins.
KTLA

San Diego DA says dozens ask to be resentenced under new murder accomplice law
Weeks after a new state law took effect that lets accomplices convicted of murder seek early release from prison, dozens of inmates have petitioned San Diego County prosecutors and the courts to have their cases reviewed. The law, which makes it harder for prosecutors to charge accomplices in homicides with murder, passed the Legislature last year and took effect Jan. 1.
KPBS

Head of robbery-prostitution ring's conviction upheld in murder case
A state appeals court panel Thursday upheld the conviction of the head of a robbery-prostitution ring for a crime spree in which two men were killed and another was wounded in South Los Angeles. The three-justice panel from California's 2nd District Court of Appeal rejected the defense's contention that there were errors in the case of Michael Mosby, who is serving a life prison term without the possibility of parole for the April 18, 2014, shooting death of Pedro Rodriguez, 36, and the April 23, 2014, killing of William Quezada, 29.
My News LA

Consumer Information

Candy Crime: Sacramento Counties file complaint against candy companies for 'misleading customers'
Some California counties say customers are being ripped off when it comes to candy with boxes that look big but hold fewer sweets than expected. Now prosecutors are trying to put an end to the problem by taking candy companies to court. Valentine's Day is less than a month away and store shelves are stocked with sweet treats, but sometimes those big boxes of chocolates are leaving customers sour.
CBS 13 Sacramento

Most keyless cars are easy to steal using cheap equipment, consumer advocates warn

Criminals can easily steal top keyless-car models using cheap equipment that's available online, consumer advocates have warned. The warning was issued Monday by the organization Which?, following a study by the German automobile club ADAC. The study looked at 237 models of cars that can be started with an electronic rather than mechanical key, and found thieves could unlock 230 of them without much difficulty.
Fortune

California / National

Lawmaker moves to name stretch of Highway 101 after deputy killed in Borderline shooting
A state legislator from Thousand Oaks has introduced a resolution to name a stretch of Highway 101 that runs through the city in honor of Sgt. Ron Helus, the Ventura County Sheriff's Office lawman killed in the line of duty during the mass shooting at the Borderline Bar & Grill last fall. Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin introduced the resolution Monday, the same day the Assembly adjourned in honor of the 12 Borderline victims, her office announced.
Ventura County Star

California lawmakers seek tax cuts for sluggish pot industry
California's much-hyped, year-old marijuana industry fell woefully short of expectations in 2018 and industry leaders blame their inability to compete with the state's robust black market, which doesn't pay the taxes and navigate the red tape they do. So on Monday, several cannabis-industry supporting state lawmakers proposed to slash taxes as a way to jump start California's legal marijuana marketplace.
NBC4

Kamala Harris's justice record in spotlight as she launches 2020 bid
When Kamala Harris announced her candidacy for US president this week, the senator from California was quick to highlight her long career in the justice system, which had propelled her to become the state's first African-American and female attorney-general. "I am a career prosecutor," Ms Harris told ABC television. "My entire career has been focused on keeping people safe."
Financial Times

A 20-cent 'mystery surcharge' on gas? California lawmakers ask AG to find out why
Since at least 2015, Californians have been paying a "hidden surcharge" on gasoline that adds an average of 20 cents to each gallon - costing drivers more than $17 billion - and now a coalition of lawmakers is asking the attorney general to find out why. A group of 19 legislators, including a dozen from the Bay Area, sent a letter Monday requesting that the state's Department of Justice investigate the mystery cost identified in a 2017 report on the state's high gasoline prices.

Bay Area News Group

Lawsuit claims California bail industry keeps premiums high
A lawsuit filed on behalf of bail customers claims surety companies and agents in California conspire to keep premiums high. Four public-interest groups filed the antitrust lawsuit Tuesday in Alameda County against more than 20 companies and agents, the Los Angeles Times reported. The lawsuit alleges the defendants have worked since 2004 at least to discourage bail agents from offering discounts or rebates and retaliate against those who do not cooperate.
AP

White House prioritizes opioid abuse in first national drug control strategy
The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy outlined Thursday its top priorities for combating illicit drug abuse and distribution in the United States in the office's first National Drug Control Strategy. The release of the report comes the same day that the drug control office's first permanent director since the Obama administration, Jim Carroll, was sworn-in by Vice President Mike Pence.
CNN

Guns

This California fairground banned gun shows. Now it's getting sued
A group of firearm dealers and Second Amendment advocates is suing a California county fair board, alleging that its decision last year to ban gun shows restricts the Constitutional rights of gun owners. The lawsuit against the Del Mar Fairgrounds of San Diego County was filed Monday in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California. The primary plaintiff is B & L Productions, which claims to be the largest vendor of gun show events in California.
Fresno Bee

NRA seeks to topple 2 strict California gun laws
More than two years after California voters made it illegal to possess high-capacity gun magazines commonly used in mass shootings, the National Rifle Association has tied the measure up in court. Now the gun lobby has set its sights on a nearly 2-decade-old law that banned the sale of those devices in the state. That law, which took effect in 2000, has made it illegal to buy or sell magazines that can hold more than 10 cartridges.
San Francisco Chronicle

States are funding the gun violence research the Feds won't
Garen Wintemute estimates that from the time he started studying gun violence in the early 1980s until a few years ago, there were maybe 15 researchers in the entire country who were focused on the issue. "There

weren't nearly enough of us," he said. "What's 15 people up against a problem of this magnitude?" But several years ago, Wintemute, an emergency medicine physician, got an opportunity to fill that gap.
The Trace

Corrections

Salinas Valley State Prison inmate complaint process blasted in state report

A new state report slams Salinas Valley State Prison's process for reviewing inmates' grievances against staff, finding more than half of the investigations were "inadequate." Also, "(prison officials) made decisions on inadequate investigative work," says the Special Review: Salinas Valley State Prison report from the state's Office of the Inspector General.
Salinas Californian

Mule Creek prison warden under investigation, escorted off premises by FBI

The Mule Creek prison warden was escorted off the premises by the FBI. According to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), Joe Lizarraga, who serves as the Mule Creek State Prison Warden, is under investigation. Information on the investigation, including when it began, has not been released.
ABC10 Sacramento

Wife of San Quentin deputy warden gets prison job after qualifications relaxed

The wife of San Quentin State Prison's second-in-command was selected for a coveted position in the prison's health care department after two qualification requirements were dropped from the job post, according to internal documents and sources familiar with the matter.
San Francisco Chronicle

Homeless

Valley L.A. city councilman wants criminal charges against people who camp, dwell in city's rural brush areas

Just two months after a wildfire destroyed hundreds of structures and forced mass evacuations, affecting thousands of residents in Los Angeles and Ventura counties, a San Fernando Valley L.A. City Councilman has rolled out a proposal he hopes will prevent wildfires. A motion introduced Jan. 15 by City Councilman Bob Blumenfield, calls to criminally charge individuals who will camp or dwell in brush areas that are prone to wildfires.
Los Angeles Daily News

LA County Invests $3.8M in city partnerships to fight homelessness

Building on their regional approach to tackling homelessness, the Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative and United Way of Greater Los Angeles announced the award of more than $3.8 million in Measure H funding to bolster city-specific plans to combat and prevent homelessness. This funding award is a significant next step in strengthening the collaboration between the county and cities in the region, which are united in their commitment to address this complex humanitarian crisis.
SCV TV

Pensions

Gov. Newsom proposes to chip away at mountain of pension liability and ease school districts' burden

In his freshman budget, Gov. Gavin Newsom heartened beleaguered school districts and community colleges by offering pension-cost relief. Districts had been bracing for a big increase in payments to CalSTRS, the pension fund for California teachers and administrators. Instead, under the proposed budget, they'll pay about half the raise in rates they had anticipated next year and in 2020-21.
EdSource

Gavin Newsom's record offers hints about how he'll handle unions and California pensions

Gov. Gavin Newsom won election with support from the state's unions, pledging to at least one of them that he would protect public employee pensions, yet his record and a couple of his key cabinet appointees suggest he's open to reducing benefits for government workers if money becomes scarce. California public employees will soon get a sense of his priorities for labor.
Sacramento Bee

CalSTRS votes to oppose statewide ban on public funds' investments in private prisons

CalSTRS' board voted Thursday to oppose a state bill that would require CalSTRS and CalPERS to divest investments in private prison companies by July 1, 2020. The bill also would bar the $214.9 billion California State Teachers' Retirement System, West Sacramento, and the $348.7 billion California Public Employees Retirement System, Sacramento, from making additional or new investments or renewing existing investments in a private prison company.
Pensions & Investments

California pension funds losing tens of millions of dollars on PG&E

Nobody is happy about PG&E's bankruptcy filing, but California's two biggest public pension systems are positioned to absorb losses on the utility's stock without major repercussions. That's because the pension funds' multi-million dollar investments in PG&E are tiny fractions of the

portfolios that CalPERS and CalSTRS control.
Sacramento Bee

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